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BERNARD GRIBBLE



THE 'GEORGE AND DRAGON'
HOUGHTON

BERNARD GRIBBLE

THE clever son of a famous father, Bernard Gribble is a young artist whose career should be well worth watching. Nature has equipped him with two of her most precious gifts to an artist, the sense of form and the sense of colour; she has also given him a strong dramatic instinct. At present his work is in an early stage of development; he is still hesitating which direction it shall ultimately take, and is feeling his way amidst various influences towards the promised goal.

From his early childhood it was the sea which had attracted his fancy, and he loves to paint her in all her varying moods of storm and sunshine. It is by his pictures of battleships that he has made his

name familiar to the public. He handles his subjects with great breadth and spirit, and displays a marvellous accuracy of detail. *The Lifeboat and her Crew*, exhibited in this year's Academy, shows him at his best, I think. It is a strong piece of realism, and is singularly free from any touch of exaggeration or striving after theatrical effect. The grim tragedy of the struggle between life and death—the strength of a handful of poor storm-tossed humanity pitted in fearful odds against the fury of the elements—is a subject that requires no little power of treat-



ment. In Bernard Gribble's hands the tragedy acquires its full significance. The drawing of the figures in the lifeboat is absolutely convincing

EARLY TRAINING

in its sincerity, and they breathe life and movement. The picture in its every detail is a masterpiece of technical knowledge, and the grey mist effects are finely rendered. The only fault I can find is in the painting of the trough of the sea, where the colour is laid on a trifle too thickly, giving an undue sense of opaqueness.

sunniest moods rendered faithfully by one whose patient study of her has earned its reward.

The earliest training Bernard Gribble received was from Mr. Albert Toft, with whom he studied drawing from the life. It was intended that the lad should follow in his father's footsteps and become an architect. Herbert Gribble had

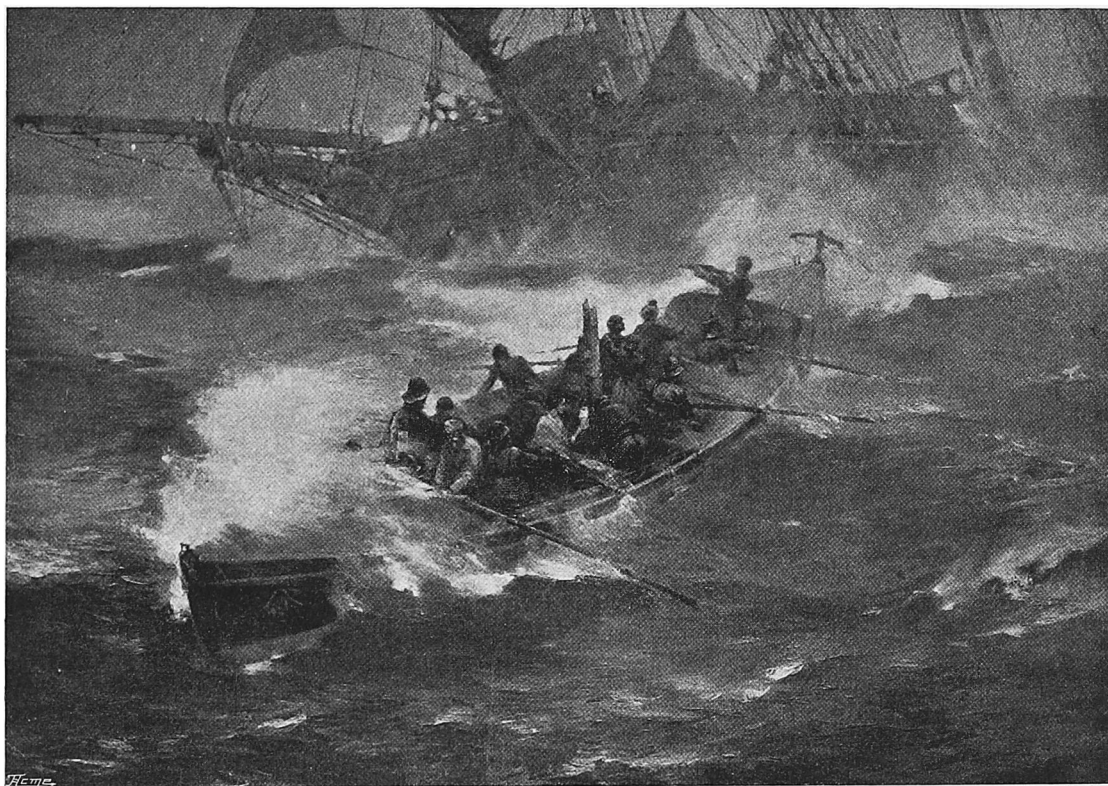


FISHING BOATS PUTTING OUT TO SEA
BY BERNARD GRIBBLE

The direct contrast is the *Fishing Smack putting out to Sea*, a *View of Plymouth Sound*, exhibited in the New Gallery. Here we have all the fine qualities of light and colour. The flaming sunset sky is reflected in the crisp blue waters of the bay. A fishing smack, its tawny sails spread to the breeze, is leaving port, followed by other boats. In the background stretches the long, low outline of an English seaport against the cliffs, and a ship rocks lazily at anchor. The charm of the picture lies in its vigour and freshness and its happy colour; it is a bit of nature in one of her

achieved fame by his creation of the Brompton Oratory. At the age of thirty this gigantic work had been entrusted to him by those who recognised his capabilities, and it stands now, well-nigh completed, a splendid monument to his memory.

At the early age of forty-six, in the hay-day of his success, death cut him down. Being called to Plymouth to superintend the building of the 'Armada Memorial,' which he had designed, Mr. Gribble, with his family, settled there for a time, and young Bernard haunted the naval dock-



THE LIFEBOAT AND HER CREW
BY BERNARD GRIBBLE

yard, where the ships attracted and fascinated his youthful mind. That accuracy of detail which marks his work at the present day is doubtless owing in great measure to the technical knowledge he then acquired. As a black-and-white artist of marine subjects he has few recognised rivals. When last year a war with France seemed imminent he received notice to hold himself in readiness to join the fleet at the shortest notice. It was a keen disappointment to him that the Fashoda affair was amicably settled without the firing of a single shot, and the enthusiastic fellow-artist cannot but sympathise with him in his personal view of the matter!

While at Plymouth young Gribble attended the local School of Art, whose principal evidently believed in the expediency of allowing students full freedom of action as a means to success. He put in only a rare and fugitive appearance in the

class-rooms, where a dozen pupils worked, or did not work, according to their good pleasure. Young Gribble was tacitly recognised by his comrades as boss, and would go from easel to easel pointing out this fault and suggesting that improvement, his opinion being meekly accepted for gospel. Then came a change over the spirit of the scene, and the same year we find him in Brussels studying the violin. Music was the profession he had adopted by choice, and brush and palette were to be relegated to a secondary place in the future he had mapped out for himself. Passionately fond of music, and endowed with a fine ear and great purity of musical expression, Bernard Gribble might have become a shining light in the musical world, but the old adage *L'homme propose et Dieu dispose* was once again to be verified. An accident, incurred by a pistol shot he received in the left hand, effectually

CONTINENTAL TRAINING



A DERELICT BOAT
BY BERNARD GRIBBLE

put a stop to his career as a virtuoso, and made him turn his attention once more to the neglected Muse. Soon afterwards he accompanied his father to Antwerp, where the latter intended to devote himself to the study of Flamboyne architecture.

It will be seen that the lad was acquiring the immense advantage to an artist of studying art under fresh aspects. This method of training the perceptions and the intelligence is of untold value. Copying casts in the confined atmosphere of a class-room results too often in hopeless commonplace. It is an acknowledged fact that our National Art Schools are lamentably behind those of France, Germany, and Holland. In our institutions we are strictly conservative and move in a narrow groove, where the spirit of enterprise and innovation is quickly stifled. So the young English artist, who would perfect himself in the knowledge of the mistress whom he

has chosen, hastens off to Paris—the promised land—as soon as means permit or the lucky chance offers itself. All the technical perfection he may afterwards reach he will tell you he acquired in this or that world-renowned studio of the French masters.

The years spent abroad have left their stamp on Bernard Gribble's work and given it a boldness and finish he would hardly otherwise have so soon attained. Like all young artists he fashions his work after certain ideals. Amongst French painters he worships Bastien Lepage, while he owes some of his methods to the influence of Frank Brangwyn. He is also an ardent admirer of William Wyllie's, and in his black-and-white work has been to a certain extent led by him.

In Bernard Gribble's pictures the predominant tones are soft greys and browns. In this preference for subdued colour I am not sure he does



*A PORTRAIT
BY BERNARD GRIBBLE*

POINT AND PILLOW LACES

himself full justice. I should call him rather a painter of light and atmosphere, for when these are the key-notes he excels. He lays on colour with a broad, free touch, yet exempt from all garishness.

In 1891, at the age of eighteen, he exhibited for the first time in the Royal Academy. His picture, *A Ship on Fire*, was favourably noticed by the critics, and the first stepping-stone to future success was laid. Since then he has exhibited every year in the Royal Academy, for the last five years in the New Gallery, in the Institute, and the Walker Gallery. His success is not confined to his native shores alone, for the Princess of Monaco, who is a warm admirer of his work, has allotted him two places *à perpétuité* in the *Exposition des Beaux Arts* at Monte Carlo.

As a personality Bernard Gribble is both fascinating and original. He possesses a lively, restless temperament, and from his mother's side has inherited the Irish sense of humour. He rejoices in an uncommon versatility, for besides being a musician he is a first-rate mimic. He is a capital companion and a 'good fellow' in the full sense of the term. There is also another side to his character. This is best indicated by his own admission that he loves to sit during choir practice in some dim corner of the organ gallery in the great Oratory which is for him so full of the memories of the past, and there dream of the future, the future that should hold a golden store for him, for he possesses ambition, power, and originality, three attributes that should carry him far along the road to fame.

B. KENDALL.

POINT AND PILLOW PLACES, BY W. G. BOWDOIN

Interesting information concerning priceless dreams in thread. Ancient and modern achievements in needle-work. Collections of enormous value owned by Royal personages.

QUEEN VICTORIA's collection of lace is valued at something like £80,000. The Princess of Wales owns £50,000 worth of lace, and the late ex-Empress Eugénie had a splendid collection. Pope Leo XIII., however, surpasses them all, as his collection is estimated to be worth almost, if not quite, two hundred thousand pounds sterling. The ancient Court dresses and costumes, in which lace was a most important part, were often prodigal in value, and some courtiers are said to have worn laces at Court the value of which did not fall below from £60,000 to £80,000. Many portraits of Queen Elizabeth show her as wearing much lace and splendid ruffs sustained by means of golden wire, before the efficacy of starch was known and utilised. In America George Washington wore lace collars and cravats, as did also Benjamin Franklin, Robert L. Livingston, and others of their contemporaries.

The origin of lace-making is veiled in obscurity. Contentions for the honour of the discovery and application of this art are many, and claimants are to be found in nearly all of the countries of

Western Europe. It is lamentable that the knowledge we really have on the subject is so very meagre, but in spite of research all that seems definite and chronologically positive is that the art is of very great antiquity.

When man first discovered here and there in the forests and jungles that nature had provided a network in which the beasts of the field and birds of the air were sometimes made prisoners, it is not impossible that it was then suggested to him that a similar but totally artificial construction might thus be made and that under such inspiration, out of tough grasses, running vines and twigs, rude nets were made by him, crudely constituting in such a primitive way the original ancestral lace. Lace by its adorning possibilities, as well as by its commercial value, at a very early period attracted and has since held the world's attention. We have been told that the Swiss Lake Dwellers had their lace or knotted work. So in a larger measure had the Egyptians, and recent discoveries at Coptos would seem to indicate that there, also, was lace or something akin to it, known, made and admired.

The beautiful raised points of Venice, Punto di Venezia, Punto di Spagna, Points d'Alençon, the bobbin laces of Milan and Genoa, the